

27 PROPERTIES NAMED TO VIRGINIA LANDMARKS REGISTER

–Register listings promote state and federal tax-credit rehabilitations and preservation easements –

RICHMOND – A drive-in theater still operating near Abingdon, a circa-1865 log cabin associated with an African American tombstone carver in Mecklenburg County, and an 83,000-acre rural historic district in southern Albemarle County were among the 27 properties added to the Virginia Landmarks Register June 6 by the Department of Historic Resources.

The Moonlite Theater, a well known landmark to people in southwest Virginia, opened in the summer of 1949 during the heyday of drive-in theaters when there were more than 800 across the U.S. The Moonlite is one of eight drive-ins operating in Virginia today. One of the earliest survivors, it was constructed just 16 years after the first drive-in theater opened in New Jersey in 1933. As an exceptional example of a unique type of building and business associated with the rise of America's car culture during the mid-20th century, the Moonlite Theater is the first drive-in to be listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register.

The Patrick Robert "Parker" Sydnor Log Cabin, circa-1865 and situated on a 6-acre plot, served as the home place for several generations of African Americans after the Civil War. The property was originally purchased by a former slave from the plantation where she had once been enslaved; the cabin is a tangible reminder of the history of African American families in Mecklenburg County and elsewhere in Virginia who established themselves as either tenant or landowning farmers on land associated with the plantations where they were formerly enslaved. The cabin reveals its original materials, design, and simple but careful workmanship. It is owned by descendants of Patrick Sydnor, who lived there during the 1930s and '40s, working as a carver of tombstones.

Including Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, the Southern Albemarle Rural Historic District is the largest district in Virginia, and traces its non-Indian settlement back to the 1720s when wealthy Tidewater Virginians pushed westward into the colony's frontier, developing a mostly slave-based economy of tobacco plantations and production. Eventually developing a diversified economy, the district features early planters' estates, scattered turnpike-era and crossroads villages, former canal ports, and post-Civil War African-American villages.

The Southern Albemarle district shows the early influence of Jefferson and boasts numerous buildings constructed by his craftsmen and builders. It contains 1,591 properties, consisting of 4,459 architectural and archaeological historic resources, ranging from high-style mansions to vernacular farm buildings to 1920s-era workers' housing to archaeological sites dating to the 18th and 19th centuries as well one prehistoric Native American site. In addition to Jefferson, the district is also closely associated with President James Monroe, Senator Andrew Stevenson, Governors Thomas Mann Randolph and Edward Coles, and the missionary Charlotte Digges "Lottie" Moon. It also

includes 23 properties previously listed individually on the state landmarks register and the National Register of Historic Places.

In addition to the three landmarks above, the following properties also were added to the state register by the two advisory boards of the Department of Historic Resources during their joint quarterly meeting; the properties are grouped according to DHR's regional district offices:

In the Capital (Richmond) and central piedmont region:

- Brook Road Jefferson Davis Highway Marker, in **Henrico Co.**, is one of 16 markers in Virginia erected along the Jefferson Davis Highway (U.S. 1) between 1927 and 1947 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy as a memorial to the president of the Confederate States of America during the Civil War.
- Carr's Hill, on the campus of the University of Virginia, in **Albemarle Co.**, which serves as the university's president's house, was designed by renowned architect Stanford White and built in 1909.
- Cool Well, a rare type of house once common in **Hanover Co.**, was built circa 1835 for a prosperous farmer and slaveholder, who operated a tavern.
- Cumberland County Courthouse Historic District, **Cumberland Co.**, reflects the slow growth of this court house village, dating back to 1777, as it emerged as an important regional rural commercial center.
- Department of Public Utilities, Howard Road Facility, in the **City of Richmond**, built between 1925 and 1933, reflects innovations in early 20th-century industrial architecture as well as the rapid expansion of the city and its public utilities' infrastructure for gas and water.
- Duke House, in **Louisa Co.**, is a good example of a well-built, late-18th-century dwelling that is now rare.
- Kippax Plantation Archaeological Site, in **Hopewell**, has intact historic deposits and features containing artifacts from the 17th to 20th century as well as prehistoric Native American artifacts, on land possibly connected with the granddaughter of Pocahontas and John Rolfe.
- Spring Bank, in **Lunenburg Co.**, features a Late Georgian-style dwelling built in 1793 for Bishop John Stark Ravenscroft, the first Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina, who was married to Anne Burwell, daughter of Colonel Lewis Burwell, a wealthy land owner.

In the Northern Virginia and Shenandoah Valley region:

- Edom Store and Post Office, in **Rockingham Co.**, is Federal and Greek Revival–style brick building that served the community of Edom from circa 1833, when it was constructed through to 1940, when the store closed and the post office relocated.
- Green Garden, **Loudoun Co.**, a 34-acre farm, features a Greek Revival–style house, circa 1833, that was used by Mosby’s Rangers and as a field hospital during the Civil War.
- Home Farm, in **Loudoun Co.**, dates to the mid-1700s when it was established by four wealthy Quaker farmers and businessmen; a portion of the main residence incorporates today the site’s original log dwelling.
- Little River Turnpike Bridge, in **Loudoun Co.**, a distinctive stone arch bridge, constructed circa 1826, is associated with the Little River Turnpike, which linked part of the county to the port of Alexandria.
- Mountain Home, in **Warren Co.**, a farmstead with a Greek Revival–style residence built in 1847 and strategically positioned on the road from Front Royal to Chester Gap, was repeatedly crisscrossed by both Confederate and Federal forces during the Civil War, yet the house was never significantly damaged during the war.
- Oakley Farm, in **Bath Co.**, a 60-acre property located on the old Jackson River Turnpike, features a Federal and Greek Revival brick residence built for the county’s second-serving clerk of court in the mid-1830s; the property, which includes a complex of 14 farm buildings, served as a rural dining establishment and recreational destination for guests at the county’s resorts, including The Homestead, in the early 20th century.
- Western State Boundary Increase, in **Staunton**, expands the previously listed Western State Historic District to include the site of the circa-1899 steam-generating plant that heated the hospital complex and, beginning in 1914, the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind, until both institutions ceased operations in 2002.

In the Roanoke and southwest region:

- Gwin Dudley Home Site (Twin Chimneys), a state-owned property, features two stone chimneys, the last visible remnants of one of **Franklin County’s** oldest home sites, established by a Revolutionary War veteran circa 1795.
- Salem Avenue--Roanoke Automobile Commercial Historic District, in the **City of Roanoke**, includes many commercial and industrial buildings built during the first-half of the 20th century, including many early car dealerships, repair garages, and

auto-parts stores.

- W. N. Seay House, in **Buena Vista**, is a handsome two-story Victorian-era house, built in 1889 for W. N. Seay, one of the town's founders.

From the Tidewater region:

- Fort Nelson DAR Chapter House, in **Portsmouth**, is the first purpose-built DAR chapter house in Virginia, constructed 1935 in a Colonial Revival style that duplicates historic Tidewater homes; it still serves the DAR's Fort Nelson chapter, founded in 1896.
- Hampton City Hall, **Hampton**, an example of Art Deco government architecture, was built in 1938-39 with funds from the Public Works Administration; it served as a city hall until 1962, when it was then used to house a juvenile court and probation offices. Currently vacant, the building is being renovated for condominiums.
- Old Thomas James Store, in **Mathews Co.**, constructed between 1810 and 1820, is a rare surviving example in the South of an antebellum general store; the building is being relocated by the Mathews County Historical Society to save it from demolition.
- Roseville, a circa-1807 plantation, in **King William Co.**, has a significant collection of buildings, including the main house and a one-time school, and two cemeteries, one of which contains the graves of slaves.
- Southern Bagging Company, in **Norfolk**, was a warehouse constructed in 1918 for manufacturing jute bags and ties for shipping cotton and other agricultural products; it is the only remaining building associated with the bagging industry in Norfolk, which lasted from the late 1890s through the 1950s.
- Knotts Creek—Belleville Archaeological Site is located in **Suffolk** on state-owned land; the site contains important archaeological information about the lifeways of Native Americans in coastal Virginia from as early as 500 BC through to about 1600 AD., as well as information relating to the expansion of English settlements from Jamestown during the second-quarter of the 17th-century, when the area was inhabited by the Nansemond Indians.

The Department of Historic Resources will now forward these nominations to the National Park Service for consideration to listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Photographs and detailed information about each of property is available on the DHR website at http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/homepage_features/board_activities.htm.

Listing a property on the VLR places no restrictions on owners, although the recognition allows property owners to receive technical assistance from the DHR or pursue state rehabilitation tax-credit incentives and programs. Listing on the state and national

registers has spurred economic revitalization efforts in many historic districts throughout the state. Owners of register-listed properties also have the opportunity to donate the development rights to their properties to the Commonwealth through the preservation easement program.

For a property or resource to be listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register, it must meet important historic criteria. It can do so through association with significant historical events or persons, or through possession of outstanding archaeological or architectural features.

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